



KENT COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2014

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**Worldwide Ebola Outbreak: Local Agencies, Hospitals and
First Responders are Trained and Prepared**

GRAND RAPIDS – Officials from the City of Grand Rapids, Kent County, area hospitals and first response agencies met Monday to discuss emergency preparedness regarding the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus worldwide. Discussions centered on the virus, transmission, prevention, patient isolation and monitoring, in case there was a patient with Ebola-like symptoms and had travelled to (or had close contact with someone from) the region impacted by Ebola.

"This meeting brought key first responders and healthcare providers to the same table to discuss our preparedness plans with county and city officials," said Jack Stewart, Emergency Management Coordinator. "We need to be able to respond quickly, while making sure we are protecting our front-line personnel and others." The meeting resulted in a decision to re-establish the Metropolitan Medical Response System, which will ensure a coordinated effort.

The meeting included representatives of Emergency Management, the Grand Rapids City Manager's Office, Grand Rapids Police Department, Grand Rapids Fire Department, Kent County Health Department, Kent County Administrator's Office, Kent County EMS, Spectrum Health, Mercy Health Saint Mary's, and Metro Health Hospital. "We are working to bring all of the right people to the table to discuss this emerging health threat," said Greg Sundstrom, Grand Rapids City Manager. "Knowing who to call before an emergency helps us provide the most successful response we can."

The Kent County Health Department has provided guidance to area health care providers, based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) direction. "The region's top emergency and medical professionals are making sure all providers have the right information and tools," said Dan Koorndyk, Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. "This type of cooperation ensures that our team is always prepared and informed."

Area hospitals are continuously training for the unexpected. "We welcome the opportunity to work with our Kent County partners on this issue," Michael Kramer, MD, Spectrum Health Senior Vice President & Chief Quality Officer. "Spectrum Health is committed to providing all available assistance to our partners to educate and protect our community and health care workers."

"As a community well-known for its collaboration, West Michigan's health care providers and key stakeholders are preparing as best as we can, focusing on education, awareness and monitoring to prevent Ebola from occurring within our region," said Mary Neuman, RN, BSN, MM, CIC, Director of Infection Control at Mercy Health Saint Mary's. "All these pieces to keep our community safe will require constant and open communication among our health care systems."

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"By working together with the Kent County Health Department and area hospitals and using CDC guidelines, we are able to share best practices that truly benefit our community," said Svetlana Dembitskaya, Metro Health chief operating officer. "Our community can rest assured that we are working together to provide the high quality care West Michigan residents expect and deserve."

Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease in humans. The CDC continues to issue regular updates to state and local authorities. The outbreak continues to affect several countries in West Africa: Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. Currently, those at highest risk include healthcare workers and the family and friends of a person infected with Ebola. A person infected with Ebola is not contagious until symptoms appear, which can take up to 21 days. Signs and symptoms of Ebola are flu-like in nature. They typically include:

- Fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising

No one in Kent County has met the criteria for testing at this time, and no cases of Ebola have been confirmed in Michigan.

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